

9
HOLY ORDERS.

OR, AN

ESSAY

ON

ORDINATION.

By JOHN BREKELL,
Author of the CHRISTIAN WARFARE, &c.

Δίκαιον οὖν, καὶ ὅσιον, ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ὑπηρετοῦς ἡμᾶς μάλλον
γινέσθαι τῷ Θεῷ ἢ τοῖς ἐν ἀλαζονείᾳ, καὶ ἀκαταστασίᾳ μυσαροῦ
ζήλου ἀρχηγοῖς ἐξακολουθεῖν, — εἰς τὸ ἀπαλλοτριῶσαι ἡμᾶς τῷ
καλῷ ἔχοντες.

Clem. Rom. Ep. ad Corinth.

L O N D O N :

Printed and sold by J. WAUGH, at the Turk's-Head
in Lombard-Street. MDCCLII.

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OF THE

TESTAMENT

ON

ORDINATION.

BY JOHN D. KELLY.

Author of the Christian Warfare, &c.

London: Printed by J. W. Smith, at the 'Star and Garter' Press, in Strand, 1841.

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Holy Orders, &c.



THE ancient rite and practice of Ordination may be deduced from the words of St. Paul, 1 Tim. v. 22. *Lay hands suddenly on no man; neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.*

At the 17th verse, he lays down this rule of direction about the encouragement due to those ministers of Christ, who behaved well in their holy function. *Let the Elders, that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour; especially they, who labour in the word, and doctrine. i. e. are not only employed, but take great pains, in the work of the ministry (a). For (as he adds, verse 18.) the scripture saith: Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn; and, The la-*

A 2

bourer

(a) Aliud enim erat docere, & laborare in verbo; aliud docendi munus, adeoque titulum Presbyteri, negligentius sustinere.

Selden de Synedr. lib. 2. cap. 7. sec. 7.

bourer is worthy of his hire. In the next place, he proceeds, to shew, on the other hand, what course was proper to be taken with those, that might be reported to behave ill in the sacred office. In which case, *St. Paul* directs *Timothy* to act with some caution, and not to be over-hasty in believing every story to their disadvantage: because the ministers of the gospel might have their enemies, whose envy and malice would prompt them, to blast their valuable characters, in order to destroy their credit, and usefulness in the church. (verse 19.) *Against an Elder receive not an accusation, but before two, or three, witnesses.*—Nevertheless, if, upon due enquiry, and clear evidence, any such person was found guilty of the things laid to his charge, he was to be spared no more than any other man, but brought under public censure, for a warning to others. (verse 20.) *Them, that sin, rebuke before all; that others also may fear.*—And, since it was a matter of great consequence to the honour, and the interest, of the christian church, that the rules of discipline were observed with strict impartiality towards *all*, clergy, as well as laity; therefore, in the most solemn manner, says the apostle (verse 21.) *I charge thee before GOD, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.*—

After all, it is much better to prevent scandal, if possible, but more especially the scandal of bad ministers, than to have any occasion to remove it afterwards, by an act of discipline: So
that

that great care should be taken, that no unworthy persons be *ordained* to the sacred office of the christian ministry. And thus the important words above referred to, as containing in them "a view of the ancient right and practice of ordination," come in; (verse 22.) *Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other mens sins, keep thyself pure* (b). But now, that I have mentioned ordination, which, as all know, is performed with solemn fasting and prayer, hard exercise for such weakly constitutions as thine: It is adviseable to take proper care of thy health; that so thou mayest be able to bear the fatigue of such laborious work.

Therefore,

(b) Dr. Hammond supposes the apostle to refer, to the laying on of hands in *absolving penitents*. But, in order to make out the connexion, he, according to custom, brings in the *Gnostics*; and at the same time proceeds upon a wrong notion, *viz.* that the *Gnostics* abstained from wine. Vid. *Le-Clerc*, and *Whilby*. Besides, other good reasons are alleged against his interpretation, by the learned bishop of *Worcester*. (1.) "Because St. Paul had not mentioned laying on of hands, in relation to *penitents*, in this epistle; but he had done it with respect to Ordination, and that in Timothy's own case, chap. iv. 14. (2.) Because the apostle in this epistle, gives no rules concerning the *qualifications* of penitents, saying nothing *what* penitents were to be reconciled, and after what time, and under what conditions, they were to have hands laid on them, 'in token of reconciliation; nor is there a *concurrent evidence* of such a practice so *early* in the church; but he had given rules, touching bishops, and deacons, and their qualifications; and therefore we have more cause to apply it according to the chief intention and design of this epistle. (3.) Because the great use of laying on of hands, in the new testament, is for the setting persons apart for the discharge of a sacred office; so was it in the first institution of deacons, *Acts* vi. 6. and of Paul and Barnabas to a particular charge. *Acts* xiii. 2, 3. This was an antient ceremony among the *Jews*, in the solemn designation of persons to sacred offices. *Num.* xxvii. 18; 23. *Deut.* xxxiv. 9. either to be rulers or teachers in their synagogues; and from thence it

" was

Therefore, as it follows in the next verse, (verse 23.) *Drink no longer water, (i. e. only,) but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities.*---I shall conclude this enquiry into the true sense and meaning of the Apostle, with Dr. *Whitby's* words, in his note on the 25th verse of the chapter, which will point out the connexion to the end of it. "The antient Greek expositors, with *Grotius*, refer these words to *Ordination*, thus: When I said, *Lay hands suddenly on no man*; I spake not of men, whose good or bad works are manifest before hand; for they, without further discussion, may be admitted, or rejected; but of those, whose vices or good works, are latent; for they, after examination, and enquiry, cannot be long hid: And so, if thou be not hasty in laying on of hands, thou timely mayest discover them; or, if by this means thou canst not do it, thou wilt not be partaker with the sinner, as having done as much as was in thy power to discover them."

Thus then, if we understand the Apostle, in the place above referred to, to speak of *Ordination*, the notion

"was brought into the church, in the solemn designation of persons to the ministry. And (3.) If these words do not relate to ordination, St. *Paul* would have given *Timothy* no particular direction about that, which was one main part of his office; wherefore, as he left *Titus* at *Crete*, to ordain elders in every city; so doubtless *Timothy* had the same commission, which yet is no where intimated, but in these words: And according to their sense, the following words are capable of a very good meaning, thus: Be not partaker of the sins of them, who, rashly, and without due qualifications, rush upon sacred offices; for, by want of due examination, and trial, thou wilt become partaker of their guilt." Dr. *Whitby* in loc.

notion agrees to the context, both before and after, perfectly well. And, further to confirm this interpretation, it were an easy matter, to show, that the words can fairly admit no other construction *.

From hence, therefore, it is natural to observe, that,—The ordination of gospel-ministers is a religious rite and practice, authorized and warranted by the holy scriptures.

Ordination has always been considered as a business of importance, and much debate has subsisted among christians, upon this subject. I propose, therefore,

FIRST, To explain the notion and design of Ordination.

SECONDLY, Consider the proper form, and manner, of it.

THIRDLY, Shew the reasonableness and propriety of continuing the practice, in the christian church. And

FOURTHLY, Make a reply to some objections.

S E C T I O N I.

The notion and design of Ordination explained.

BY Ordination, I understand a solemn setting apart of persons to the christian ministry, or, to some special work, and service, in the christian

* See note (b)

christian church (c). And so, the proper design of Ordination, I presume, is not to infuse any particular gifts, or qualifications into the persons ordained; but, supposing them to be competently qualified for the ministerial work already, to set them apart with *peculiar solemnity* unto it, and with a pious recommendation of them, to the blessing of God in it. Thus, *e. g.* when *Barnabas* and *Saul* were separated to the work, whereunto the Holy Ghost had called them; by that solemn action they *were recommended to the grace of God*, for the said work (d). So that, their Ordainers — “did no more than pray with, and for them; and earnestly implore the divine blessing upon their future labours. In which sense *Christ’s* ministers are ordained now-a-days, or separated unto their great and solemn work (e);” that is, with *peculiar solemnity*. Moreover, *St. Paul* says to *Titus*; “For this cause left I thee in *Crete*, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain Elders, in every city (f).” — Hence it appears, that, at the first conversion of the *Cretians* to the faith, they had no Bishops or Presbyters set over them, but had all their church-offices performed by men assisted by that holy spirit, which God shed on them abundantly, through faith in *Christ*, chap.

(c) Vid. *Acts* xiii. 2. *Rom.* i. 1. 1 *Tim.* ii. 7. *Acts* xiv. 23.

Tit. i. 5.

(d) *Conf.* *Acts* xiii. 2. and xiv. 26.

(e) *Dr. Benson*, *Hist. of the first planting of the Christ. Religion*. Vol. 2. p. 52.

(f) *Titus* i. 5.

“ chap. iii. 6. though *out of these* Bishops and
 “ Deacons usually were chosen. But then, it
 “ is observable, that *things were then wanting*;
 “ or, that this was a deficiency in that church:”
 says Dr. *Whitby* (g). Therefore, as the colla-
 tion of *spiritual* gifts, already received in great
 abundance did not supersede the necessity of or-
 daining proper officers in every church; because
 the churches *were wanting*, and deficient with-
 out them; so, on the other hand, the Ordina-
 tion of such officers was not intended, to con-
 fer any extraordinary gifts upon them. For, be-
 sides that these officers usually were chosen out
 of those persons, that already had the said gifts,
 as we observed before; it is farther to be confi-
 dered, that neither *Titus*, nor any other person
 below the character of an apostle, appears to
 have had the power of imparting the *spiritual*
 gifts; but the contrary (h). Consequently the
 conferring of those gifts could not be the proper
 end and design of Ordination.

The case of *Timothy* may be thought, perhaps,
 an *exception*, for what St. *Paul* says to him.
Neglect not the gift, that is in thee, which was
given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the
hands of the Presbytery (i). But, not to insist
 that *Timothy's* case was extraordinary, as being
 done by prophecy; the gift conferred upon him,
 whatever it was, he did not receive *by*, but only
with, the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery;
 B that

(g) Expof. in loc.

(h) See *Acts* viii. 14—16. and Dr. *Benson's* history &c. Vol.

i. p. 157.

(i) 1 *Tim.* iv. 14.

that is, together with it, and at the same time that this ceremony was performed over him at his Ordination (*k*). For, in truth, the said gift was conferred upon *Timothy* by the hands of an apostle, viz. *St. Paul* himself; who appears to have been present on that solemn occasion, and probably was inspired with the particular prophecy relating to it. This may be clearly enough inferred from his own words *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands* (*l*). The different form of expression in the two passages compared together, is very obvious; and, if well observed, removes all appearance of difficulty.—Should any one ask, why *St. Paul* mentioned the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery? The answer, I think, is easy, viz. that he did it, as an *incentive*, to excite *Timothy*, not to neglect his divine gift, but duely improve it, in the diligent discharge of that sacred office, to which he was solemnly set apart at the very time that he received his gift. With the same view, as I suppose, he put *Timothy* in remembrance of his gift again, viz. *to stir him up* (*m*), to kindle his zeal and resolution in the glorious cause he had undertaken.

(*k*) μετὰ ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν τοῦ πρεσβυτερίου.

(*l*) 2 Tim. i. 6. διὰ τῆς ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν μου.

(*m*) 2 Tim. i. 6. ἀναξωπεῖν. As *Timothy* had an infirm constitution (see 1 Tim. v. 23.) he was liable to be too low-spirited, and less active than the duties of his function required; and so, he might have some occasion for such admonitions.

taken (n). From *Timothy's* case then no evidence ariseth, that any other than apostles had the distinguishing honour, under God the proper donor, of conferring the spiritual gifts; but the contrary may be inferred from *his* very instance. And, though some writers have supposed, that *Ananias* conferred the Holy Ghost upon *Saul* (o); this notion is disallowed and disproved by others (p).

I hinted before, that *Timothy's* case was extraordinary; and it doth not appear, that any spiritual gifts were commonly conferred upon persons, at the time of their Ordination. Consequently, Ordination, as a standing rite, and a stated practice, in the christian church, was not designed for that end and purpose. It is rational to think, that *Barnabas* and *Saul* had the spiritual gifts, before hands were laid on them at the time of their solemn mission to the Gentiles (q). The seven Deacons also were men full of the Holy Ghost; before even the apostles laid hands on them, to set them apart for their office (r). And, when *Paul* and *Barnabas* ordained Elders in every church (s); there is no

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inti-

(n) This construction seems to agree with the next verses, 7, 8. and the verb ἀναμνησκω governs two accusatives, one of the person, another of the thing. 1 Cor. iv. 17. So that I take St. Paul's meaning to be this; "I put thee in mind of the gift, which is in thee by the laying on of my hands. to stir up, or to animate thee." The following passage may serve for illustration. ἀναθάρσυνάτε, καὶ μοι κατὰ σμικρὸν πάλιν ἡ δραστήτης ξυνηγέρητο καὶ ἀνεξωπεύομεν. Plato. Charmid.

(o) Acts ix. 17, 18.

(p) See Dr. Benson. Hist. Vol. 1. chap. 7. sect. 3.

(q) Acts xiii. 2, 3. See Dr. Lightfoot in loc.

(r) Acts vi. 3 — 6. (s) Acts xiv. 23.

intimation of their conveying any extraordinary gifts to the said Elders at the same time. To all which let me add, the conferring of spiritual gifts is never called by the name of Ordination. These two things therefore are very different, and distinct from each other; and so they ought not to be confounded together.

Upon the whole then, I conclude that, as I said before, "The proper design of Ordination is not to infuse any particular gifts, or qualifications into the persons ordained; but, supposing them to be competently qualified for the ministerial work already, to set them apart with *peculiar solemnity* unto it, and with a pious recommendation of them to the blessing of God in it." — As to *laying on of hands*, (though it gives a particular solemnity to the sacred action) it is — "only a gesture in prayer, that imports a *designation* of the person so prayed over:" says Bishop Burnet (t).

S E C T I O N II.

The manner and form of Ordination considered.

WE who profess to make the *scripture* our rule, must look for this form; in the *Holy Scriptures* themselves. Now, the scripture form and manner of Ordination plainly is, by *fasting* and *prayer*, and *imposition of hands*. Thus, *e. g.* in the case of *Barnabas* and *Saul*

(t) Expos. on artic. 25.

Saul; when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away (u). The same method was practised by these two illustrious persons themselves, in fixing proper Pastors over the churches, which they had planteed (and from their way of proceeding we may learn, what was the common practice of all the other apostles, and consequently of the whole christian church.) For they ordained Elders in every church with prayer, and fasting (w). I grant, in this latter case, *imposition of hands* is not so expressly named, as in the former. But the manner of expression in the original (x) may aptly enough refer to it, and indeed naturally includes it, according to the fixed notion of *ordaining Elders*, as established by common use and custom.

Says a learned and judicious writer, "Though
 " the word *χειροτονεῖν* was originally used by the
 " Greeks in a peculiar sense, viz. to stretch out,
 " or lift up the hand; as the people did, when
 " they gave their votes in popular elections; yet
 " it came in time to be used in a larger sense,
 " and to signify nothing more, than barely to
 " appoint, or constitute. For, it is used by se-
 " veral Greek authors concerning one person's
 " appointing another to an office; as Dr. Ham-
 " mond on this place hath abundantly shewn.
 " And here it is predicated of the two apostles,
 " and

(u) Acts xiii. 3.

(w) Acts xiv. 23.

(x) *χειροτονήσαντες*.

“and not of the people (y).” The same thing hath been proved beyond all exception by other great critics also (z). And in this sense the word is used in other passages of scripture (a). It is to no purpose then, that some writers (b) contend, that the word in question doth not signify ordaining, according to it's primary sense and meaning. For, what they alledge, disproves not the notion, that it had this signification in the days of the apostles; or, that it was their common practice to ordain by *imposition of hands*. It is observable, that *Theophylact* useth this very word to express St. Paul's laying his hands on *Timothy* (c). And as the hands of the Ordainers are *stretched out*, at the ordination-prayer, to be laid on the person ordained; St. *Luke's* expression, even according to the proper *notation* of the word, may be supposed to glance at the *imposition of hands*, as was hinted before. Because, it's *derivative* is used to express the gesture of stretching out the hands in prayer (d).

But, what I would chiefly insist upon is, that the language of St. *Luke* in the passage aforesaid, naturally includes imposition of hands, in the

(y) Dr. *Benson*. Hist. &c. Vol. 2. p. 43. Notes.

(z) *Selden de Synedr.* lib. 1. cap. 14. lib. 2. cap. 7. sect. 7. *H. Grot. de imper. sum. potest. circ. sacra*, cap. 10.

(a) *Acts* x. 41. *2 Cor.* viii. 19.

(b) Sir *Norton Knatchbull* in loc. *Calderwood altar. Demascen.* cap. 5, &c.

(c) ὅτα σε ἐχειροτόνουν ἐπισκοπον. *Theophylact*, in *2 Tim.* i. 16.

(d) Κλυετε πανδικους
χειροτόνους λιτάς i. e.

Audite justissimam protensis manibus precationem. *Æschyl.* sept. contr. *Theb.*

the common and established notion of *ordaining Elders*. Because this was the form of Ordination in the *Jewish* church; from whence (together with the name, and the office of Elders, as is generally supposed) it was derived into the *Christian* church (e).--- That Ordination was practised by the antient *Jews*: we have not only the testimony of their own writers; but a collateral proof also from the same practice among the antient *Persians*: between whose religious rites, and those of the *Jews* a great similitude is observed. "For, all the sacred orders were regularly ordained; and no man was allowed to take upon him the priesthood of his own accord (f)."---But, in respect to *imposition of hands* in ordination; as we can trace it back to *Moses* in the *Jewish* church (g), so, we have the clearest evidence that can be, of it's being always used from the very beginning of the christian church. For, when the *Seven Deacons* were ordained to their office; it was by imposition of hands (h). And when *Timothy* was ordained to the work of an *Evangelist*; it was also by imposition of hands (i). *St. Paul* says of himself, that he was *ordained a preacher, and apostle, and teacher of the Gentiles* (k). And again; that he was called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of

(e) Vid. *Selden* ubi supra & Not. in *Eutych.* orig. artic. 10.

(f) *Hyde* religio vet. *Pers.* cap. 28, & 30.

(g) *Numb.* xxvii. 18, &c.

(h) *Acts* vi. 3; 6.

(i) 1 *Tim.* iv. 14. 2 *Tim.* iv. 5. confer *Eph.* iv. 2.

(k) 1 *Tim.* ii. 7.

of GOD (l). In these declarations he seems plainly to refer, and appeal, to that public and solemn transaction at *Antioch*, mentioned in the acts of the apostles (m). Now there were in the church, that was at *Antioch*, certain prophets, and teachers, &c.—as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, SEPARATE me Barnabas, and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had FASTED, and PRAYED, AND LAID THEIR HANDS on them, they sent them away. Here then, we have a form of Ordination † either dictated, or at least approved by the Holy Ghost. If it was the former; we may be fully assured the first Ordainers would never vary from it, but keep closely to it, in setting persons apart for the sacred offices of the church. But suppose, on the other hand, the Holy Ghost only gave a general order about separating *Barnabas* and *Saul* for their great work, without directing the particular manner: then I ask, How came the persons, concerned in that solemn transaction, to set them apart by *fasting* and *prayer*, and *imposition of hands*, but because, this method and form of Ordination was so well known, and so constantly practised, as that they readily fell into it of their own accord, without any particular direction. And since the Spirit of GOD did direct them to no other form; he must be

(l) *Rom.* i. 1. (m) *Acts* xiii. 1-3.

† The separation or appointment, or Ordination by the church of *Antioch* was not to the apostleship, but to a particular service. The apostleship, and Ordination, or appointment to it, cannot be from men, but only from God and *Christ*.

be understood, to approve of that in common use.

In a word ; If some writers are of opinion, " that imposition of hands is no *accidental*, but " a *necessary rite* of due Ordination (*n*)," they seem to have some reason for it. Because, it is even put for Ordination itself, as in other places (*o*), so particularly in the passage above cited, 1 *Tim.* v. 22. And when St. Paul says, *Lay hands suddenly on no man.* This exception confirms the rule.—Let no one say then, by way of disparagement, that it is only a *cere-*mony (*p*) ; since it is a gospel ceremony, an apostolical practice and appointment.

SECTION III.

*The reasonableness and propriety of continuing
Ordination in the christian church.*

W HETHER the thing be absolutely necessary in all cases, is not the question ; at least with me, whatever it may be with others.

(*n*) Dr. Whitby on 1. *Tim.* iv. 14.

(*o*) 1 *Tim.* iv. 14. *Hebr.* vi. 2. See Dr. Lighfoot. Op. vol. 2. p. 140.

(*p*) The word *ceremony*, in a sacred sense, properly denotes a *religious service*, or solemnity : and so may be applied to the whole of Ordination. (*Majores nostri statas solennesque ceremonias, &c. Valer. Maxim.*) But, imposition of hands, appears to be a more peculiar, and distinctive part of it, than merely praying for the ordained person. Because, any one may pray for him ; but, Ordination being an act of the Presbytery, according to, 1 *Tim.* iv. 14. it is properly performed by the imposition of *their* hands, accompanied with solemn prayer.

thers. For, in all matters of moment, cases of necessity are considered as exempted cases; and so they cannot be pleaded, or fairly urged in bar of a general rule, where the like necessity doth not occur. *Necessity*, we say, *bath no law*. But it would be wrong to infer therefore, that there is no such thing as law, which men are bound in reason and equity to observe. It will then be sufficient for my present purpose, if I can prove the great *expediency* of Ordination; and thereby evince the reasonableness, and propriety of continuing the practice, as a standing rite in the christian church.

To this end, I shall take one thing for granted; *viz.* that a standing ministry is an *institution of Christ*, suitable to the nature and design of his religion, as calculated for the benefit of all ages, down to the end of the world. Because, as the natural occasions of mankind will always require some assistance in their enquiries after truth, and some encitements to the practice of their duty; so, a positive revelation, such as the gospel is, cannot be learned without positive instruction: besides, that proper persons are necessary to guide the devotion of christian assemblies in public worship.—Accordingly, when *Christ* gave his apostles their commission; he promised to be with them *always even to the end of the world* (q). A promise that manifestly refers to a long and lasting succession of christian ministers, as well as of churches; and it is but a poor criticism, that would limit and restrain it
to

(q) *Matth.* xxviii. 20.

to the persons of the apostles, or to that particular age. It is certain, the apostles themselves, who had the spirit of truth, to guide them into the *whole truth* (r) of the gospel-scheme; understood the promise in this latitude and extent. Because, they provided for a succession of gospel-ministers, by ordaining Elders, or Presbyters, in every church (s). And, until such a provision was made; the churches were considered as deficient (t), for want of stated *Pastors*, and *Teachers* (u); and so, they would be deficient still, without some provision of the same kind.—The holy scriptures, I acknowledge, are a sufficient rule of faith and practice to the christian church; if rightly understood, and duely applied. But the sufficiency of scripture is unfairly alledged, as an argument against the necessity, and usefulness, of a standing ministry (w). For, *this*, being a gospel-institution, and so one material part of the gospel-scheme; the sufficiency of the scriptures ought, in all reason, to be considered, not in *opposition* to a standing ministry, but in *conjunction* with it. And, though the scripture is able to *make the man of God* (or the *minister of God*) *perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good work* (x) in his holy function: doth it follow from thence, that the common-people, want not the assistance of living teachers, and guides in religion? had not the *Jewish church* a *written rule*, perfect enough

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(r) *John* xvi. 13. (s) *Acts* xiv. 23.(t) *Tit.* i. 5.(u) *Eph.* iv. 2.(w) See *Indep. Whig.*(x) *2 Tim.* iii. 16, 17.

enough in it's kind, together with a standing ministry?—It is but a trifling dispute about words, for men to argue against any distinction between the clergy and laity, from the apostle's saying (y) *Feed the flock of GOD—neither as being lords over GOD'S HERITAGE* (z); by which they understand, perhaps rightly, the christian people. For, in this very place St. *Peter* makes a plain distinction between the *Pastors*, and the *flock*; that is to say, the ministers, and the people. So, likewise doth the apostle to the *Hebrews*, when he says (a): *Remember them, which have the rule over you, who have spoken to you the word of GOD, &c.* Besides, the *Jewish* church is often called GOD's heritage (b). And yet, as I observed before, there was a standing ministry in that church, and a fixed order of men, to perform the sacred offices of religion. To proceed then:

If the work of the christian ministry is to be continued through all ages; it must be highly requisite, that proper persons be *set apart* for this holy work. Because, the work cannot be carried on without hands: and improper hands might do more hurt than good. So that, if *every man hath a right to do all the good, he can*; yet, as no man hath a right to do mischief; there is a plain necessity, for a *tryal* of men's abilities and qualifications for the sacred office of the ministry, before, they are solemnly set apart to it. And, should any one, either from a high

(y) 1 *Pet.* v. 2, 3.

(z) τῶν κληρῶν.

(a) *Heb.* xiii. 7.(b) *Jerem.* ii. 7. xii. 7—9, &c.

high conceit, or, out of a secret suspicion, of himself, decline such a trial, and refuse to comply with the probationary methods, that common prudence directs, and pious custom hath established; he is in manifest danger to introduce a far worse practice by such a precedent; in danger of opening a door to unqualified persons, to the great prejudice and scandal of religion. *Let those also be first proved (c)*, was St. Paul's direction to Timothy, in appointing church-officers even of the lower kind; and much more those of a superior order, as his words imply: and for *this* very reason, he described their proper qualifications in so particular a manner *(d)*.—These directions, I say, were given to Timothy: which leads us to enquire, who are the *proper judges* in this case? now, here, *ordinis est ordinare*, seems to be a right maxim. And, undoubtedly the ordainers have a right, to judge of their own act; and to be previously satisfied about the ministerial abilities, and qualifications of the person, or persons to be ordained. Nay, they are indispensably obliged to inform themselves duely, upon this head. Because, they must *lay hands suddenly, on no man; that so they may not be partakers of other men's sins*, and make themselves accountable for the evil consequences of ordaining unfit, and unqualified persons.—We must not here, out of a false or misguided zeal for *the rights*, to the subversion of the rules, of *the christian church*, as a well ordered society, fixed under proper

(c) 1. Tim. iii. 10.

(d) Ibid. verse 1. 7.

proper regulations, and formed upon the foot of a positive divine institution; I say, we must not here confound Ordination with *election* of ministers, which are two different things. That it is an antient right belonging to the people, to *chuse* their own ministers, I dispute not; but, to *ordain* them is another thing. Thus, the *Seven Deacons*, were chosen by the people; but, that choice was not their Ordination. For, they were ordained to their office by the apostles, after the election was made by the people (*e*). Therefore, election and Ordination of ministers are not one and the same thing. *Clemens Romanus* says (*f*), "The apostles constituted their first fruits (or first converts in any place) Bishops, and Deacons, of those that should afterwards believe." So that, as one observes, "the ministry in the primitive times, was before churches (*g*)."
 right

(*e*) *Acts* vi. 3; 6.

(*f*) *Ep. ad Corinth.*

(*g*) *Cawdwell's Defence of an Ord. ministry.* This is granted, as to the extraordinary officers; but, notwithstanding what *Clemens R.* says, a different order is supposed to have taken place in respect to the ordinary officers. See Dr. *J. Owen's* enquiry into the original &c. of churches, p. 1. chap. 3. However, as the form of churches was confessedly incomplete without fixed officers; so, that the ordaining of them did not belong to the people, is evident from the reason and design of *St. Paul's* leaving *Titus* in *Crete*, *Tit.* i. 5. For, though it may be supposed, that there were no Presbyters, or Bishops in *Crete*, before he ordained them in every city; yet, if there was then a church in every city (which by the way is not certain) there was a sufficient number, of private christians, to have ordained Elders for themselves, had the right of Ordination, been invested in the people. Again, *Paul* and *Barnabas*, where they travelled, ordained Elders, in every church, *Acts* xiv. 23. This is predicated of the two apostles, and not of the people; as hath been observed before.

right of election the people might have, as to the particular persons, whose ministry they chose to attend ; the province of Ordination could not belong to them. To whom then must the administration of this solemn rite properly belong? but to those persons, that are appointed, to administer all other ordinances in the christian church. If any one require a scripture example of Ordination, performed by the ordinary officers, that succeeded the extraordinary ; let him consider, that, though the sacred history contains the *Acts of the Apostles*, it doth not descend so low as to record the *acts of their successors* in the same manner, or with the same particularity. However, we have a plain scripture instance of the Presbytery joyning in the act of Ordination (*b*) ; and this may well be thought a sufficient warrant for the practice.

Finally, since it is necessary, that proper persons be set apart, for the work of the ministry ; it must be highly reasonable, and requisite, to set them apart, to the sacred office in a *very solemn manner*. For, the more solemn, without superstition, the better. Because, the solemnity of the action hath an apt tendency, to impress

(*b*) 1 *Tim.* iv. 14. N. B. To avoid the multiplying of controversies, I purposely wave the question, concerning the identity of Bishops, and Presbyters ; which are names given to the same officers in scripture. *Acts* xx. 17 ; 28. *Tit.* i. 5 ; 7. See *Whitby* in loc. I shall only remark, that since Presbyters are admitted to lay on hands in episcopal Ordinations ; there seems to be no very wide difference between episcopal and presbyterial Ordination. However, my present design is, to vindicate the practice of Ordination at large, without any farther regard to particular hypotheses, than to insist upon it as a *clerical act*.

impress their *own* souls with a more lively sense of the dignity, and importance of the ministerial function; and at the same time to command from *others*, that respect and veneration for the ministerial character, which will naturally give additional weight and influence to gospel ministrations. And certainly, the *cure* or the care of immortal souls (that awfull and tremendous charge!) cannot be undertaken by any man with too great seriousness, and solemnity. Who then, can be so blind, as not to see, or so disingenuous, as not to acknowledge, the reasonableness, and propriety, of continuing the practice of Ordination in the christian church, particularly, according to the form already described? for, what can be more decent and solemn, or more suitable to the religious occasion every way?—Besides, as it is an apostolical practice, and appointment, on this account, it justly challenges a special regard. Where the scripture affords us no light; we must, as well as we can, grope our way in the dark: but, to shut our eyes against the light, and chuse to walk in darkness, is alike ungrateful and unwise, for, dangers there are to be avoided on both hands. On the one side; a pious imagination is apt to be fruitful in holy inventions; and, under the specious pretence of decency, great superstition hath in fact, been introduced into the christian church. On the other side; persons of a contrary temper, and complexion, are liable to run into the opposite extreme, of too little decent ceremony in things

so solemn and sacred. In this case then, what can any prudent, pious, and conscientious man do? but humbly and impartially enquire, how the first guides of the christian church (those blessed men, that were under an infallible guidance themselves) acted, and directed others to act, upon the like occasions? can any one be so vain, or presumptuous, as to think, that he can form better rules, or follow better patterns, than those of inspired men? who were expressly commissioned by *Christ*, to lay the foundation, and to settle the order, of his holy church; and have transmitted down to us an authentic account of their proceedings in the sacred writings, for the benefit, instruction, and direction of christians, through all succeeding ages of the world. Why then should we depart from the model, which they have left us? and with what consistency, can *those* do it, that profess to make the scripture the rule of their religion?—Let us make the supposition, for once, that we are not strictly tied to scripture forms; but that the matter is left to human discretion; and it is not easy to conceive, what motive any persons can have, to reject the usual form of Ordination; but such an affectation of singularity, as indicates neither that wisdom, nor that gravity, which one would ever wish to find in all candidates, for the christian ministry.

If any one now, had a mind to be captious, he might ask, under *what notion* ought Ordination to be practised? But, as there may be room here for different opinions, and every one

hath a right to enjoy his *own*; so it is a question, perhaps, of more curiosity than importance; which may serve for matter of speculation, but hath no necessary relation to practice. For, if we are agreed, that the practice of Ordination ought to be continued; every person may be left to abound in his own sense as to other points; and yet all unanimously concur in the thing.

S E C T I O N IV.

Objections answered.

P O S S I B L Y some singular people may object against the thing itself, both as to matter and form. And here I sincerely declare, that I am utterly at a loss to know, and have long wished to be informed, what wise reasons, or worthy motives, any serious and sensible man can have, to disclaim Ordination, or to disallow the continuance of it in the christian church.

Will it be said, “ that the proper design of Ordination, and particularly of the imposition of hands *therein*, was to *confer spiritual gifts*?” this, I know, hath been pretended: but, how groundless, and frivolous the pretence is, I leave all men to judge, by what hath been said in the preceding discourse.—Can it be truly alledged, that Ordination was used in the time of the apostles, only for setting apart the *extraordinary*

ordinary officers in the church, or such as were peculiar to that age? no: for, they ordained Elders in every church (i). And, who were these ordained Elders, or Presbyters? but the ordinary ministers, the stated *Pastors* and *Teachers*; that were necessary to complete the form of the churches; and to whom the administration of all ordinances for the future was committed.

Will any one pretend, “that *none but apostles* ordained? and consequently, that the use of Ordination was to cease, and expire with them?” This pretence also is without any foundation. For, other persons ordained by their appointment; *e. g. Timothy* and *Titus*.

“Well! but *Timothy* and *Titus* had the extraordinary spiritual gifts; and therefore, it may be urged, that none but such *gifted-persons* administered Ordination in those days.” To which I answer; if, this argument proves any thing, it will be in danger of proving too much; *viz.* that the administration of all ordinances ought now to be laid aside, as well as Ordination. Because, the spiritual gifts were so common at the beginning of the christian church, for the divine confirmation of the christian religion, as that all religious ministrations might be performed at the first, by persons so qualified. And, to put the matter upon the foot of a plain dilemma: either the ordinary and stated ministers of the gospel had *then* the extraordinary

(i) *Acts* xiv. 23.

nary gifts; or they had not. If they had not the extraordinary gifts; then their Ordainers, whoever they were, did not confer the said gifts upon them. Consequently, as they did not receive these gifts by their Ordination themselves, it was no disqualification in them, or, in any of their successors, for ordaining others, if they could not impart the same gifts to them. On the other hand: if they had the extraordinary gifts (which, by the way, they might have, without receiving them at their Ordination) then it will follow, not only that Ordination, but all other gospel ordinances were administered at the first, by persons endowed with the spiritual gifts. Therefore, if there is any weight in the argument, from the extraordinary gifts of the first administrators, against the continuance of Ordination after the age of miracles; it must conclude as strongly against the perpetuity of all gospel ministrations whatsoever. But, this I presume, would be carrying matters further, than any real friend of christianity can propose.

Is there then any evidence from the *nature of the thing*, or any *intimation in scripture*, that Ordination *should be* discontinued; or, is there any *hint* in ecclesiastical history, that Ordination *was* discontinued, after the apostolical age? none at all: on the contrary, as both reason and scripture are silent upon this head; so, whatever alterations may have been made as to other matters, Ordination hath stood the test, and had the vogue of all christian antiquity. It is therefore no corruption, or superstitious invention

• of

of later times; but, for any thing that appears to the contrary, the practice hath continued down from the beginning, through all ages, of the christian church. Imperfect, indeed, are the memoirs of the first ages; but, St. *Cyprian* speaks of Ordination, as administered “according to the rule handed down from God himself, and from the practice of the apostles (k).” “As for imposition of hands, it was a ceremony variously used in the Old Testament, from whence it was translated into the New, and in the primitive church used on sundry occasions, to no purpose here to enumerate; one of those actions was Ordination of church-officers, wherein, I think, it was never omitted;” says Lord *King* (l).

And now, what in the name of modesty, and good sense, can be objected to this most ancient, primitive, and apostolic practice? is it any *imposition* to insist upon it in these days? or any infringement of the liberty of private judgement? by no means. Because, as we have all a right to judge for ourselves; so we are obliged to judge by that rule, which God hath given us: and imposition properly respects unscriptural rites, and ceremonies. But, Ordination,

as

(k) *Cyprian* Epist. 67.

(l) Enquiry into the constitution, &c. of the chr. church. p. 1. ch. 5. §. 14. This learned author had an eye to the state of things in the three first centuries. Compare *Bingham's* antiq. of the chr. church. Book 4. ch. 6. S. 2.--- Cum manuum impositio nec, id est ritu plane creandi tunc Judaico, & in christianum dein, per omnia secula, derivato. *Selden de syned.* lib. cap. 7. sect 7.

as already described, hath been proved to be a scriptural rite, an apostolical practice and appointment. I therefore submit it to consideration, whether *those*, on the other side, are not guilty of imposition, who would dispense with scripture rites and rules, and are for *imposing themselves* upon the public, without complying with proper religious forms: for this evidently is an unscriptural way of proceeding. But, when from an open neglect of gospel-order, decency, and decorum, any persons boldly advance to a down-right contempt of it, and turn it into ridicule; they seem to proceed from bad to worse, and, I fear, add prophaneness, and impiety to their ignorance, and presumption. *Blessed is the man, that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law, doth he meditate day and night (m)."*

After all, it may, perhaps, be alledged, "that Ordination is a thing which hath been mistaken and turned into superstition." But may not the same remark be as justly made concerning other ordinances of the gospel? what then? must they all be laid aside? If any gospel institutions or ministrations are mistaken; let them be explained, that they may be the better understood: but let them not therefore, be wholly discarded, and quite abolished. For, certainly, the *abuse* of a thing is no good argument

ment against the use of it.—In short: while some persons express so great a dread of superstition; I cannot but heartily wish, that they would also be upon their guard against the contrary extreme; which may prove the more dangerous of the two, and the more fatal in the issue to the sacred cause of religion. To be plain, if the good christian people are led, to conceive a better opinion of a young minister's parts, and piety, when they see him willingly and gravely submit to the customary forms of Ordination; if by experience, they have inwardly felt their own souls very sensibly affected, when they beheld him receive Ordination, in the most humble and devout posture, before a numerous assembly, with plain indications of a sober, serious and self-devoting frame of spirit in his whole behaviour, under an awful sense of the great and weighty charge he is undertaking in the presence of so many spectators; if the solemn transaction hath proved a mean, *under the blessing of God*, of fixing those good impressions upon their minds, that dispose them, to treat both him, and his ministry with more regard, and thereby contribute to his comfort, and usefulness among them; in a word, if the whole religious solemnity hath an apt and proper tendency, under the divine influence, to engage both him, and his people more closely to their duty, to each other respectively; — call this superstition, if you please; but if *this be vile, let me be viler still*. Let ministers of the gospel remember the greatness of their work,

work, and their weakness together; and then, from a deep sense, of *their dependance on God*; they will not only consent, but earnestly desire, to be *recommended to his grace* in any way; but more especially in a *solemn way*; and most of all in *such a way*, as the holy apostles, prophets, and evangelists have consecrated by their blessed examples; and which the wisdom and piety of all ages hath approved, and practised.

C O N C L U S I O N.

From this Essay may be deduced the following particulars, to which, both ministers of the gospel, and their bearers, may attend, with a view of deriving thence, advantages to themselves.

- I. **H**ENCE may be inferred the *excellency* and *usefulness* of a standing ministry of the gospel; and consequently, the strict obligation, that lieth upon all christian people, to entertain a very high and honourable regard for it. For, this institution is derived from *Christ* and his apostles; and therefore, allowing *them* to be, proper judges in the case (which, I hope is a reasonable demand) the justness of the inference cannot be disputed, and much less disproved. If a gospel-ministry is despised by a set of men, who have little esteem for the gospel itself; we have no cause to wonder at it: nor need we be surprized at the rude and licentious freedoms

freedoms, that have been taken with the ministerial character and order by some petulant writers, who have at the last pulled off the mask, and turned advocates for infidelity. But it is just matter of astonishment, if any true friend of christianity, can conspire with it's avowed enemies, in running down a gospel-ministry, or treating such an excellent institution of *Christ*, with any degree of flight and contempt. — Had men any real respect, even for natural religion, one would imagine, it should be no displeasing matter to them, if the *God of heaven be publicly worshipped and adored*, at the least, one day in seven, as the great author, and wise disposer of all things. But, how could divine service be duely, and regularly performed? how could it be conducted with any decency, and decorum? to any advantage, or edification; if no proper persons were appointed, to preside in christian assemblies, and to lead the public devotions? — Besides; if men would worship God acceptably, they must do it with *understanding*; and also take due care, that their lives and conversations agree to their religious professions. It is therefore highly requisite, that people be statedly instructed in the knowledge of their duty, and frequently excited to the practice of it. Every man hath an immortal soul to save. But, alas! how many have little capacity; and, it may be, less inclination, or leisure, to inform themselves usefully, in the great points of religion, without proper guides and teachers!

—In this case then, to call them off, once or twice a week, from the common affairs of the world, that they may converse with God in a public, and solemn way; that they may meditate upon heavenly things; that they may have the great principles, the important duties, and the weighty motives of religion opened, and applied to them: for one man to leave his farm; another, his merchandize; and people of all ranks and conditions, to meet together in any convenient place of worship by scores, or hundreds at a time; jointly to praise God, *and pray unto him, and hear his holy word*, and unite in all the offices of religion (under the guidance and direction of persons devoted, and solemnly appointed, to the sacred service) humbly and rationally expecting the blessing of ALMIGHTY God, upon his *own appointments, and institutions*:—Let common sense and reason judge, if *this* be not a proper mean, and a most expeditious method, under the divine benediction, to propagate moral truth, and righteousness all round a neighbourhood, and to nourish universally in the minds of men, a just and lively sense of God, and religion.—But, is the success answerable? there is reason to fear, it is not. However, the fault doth not lie in the institution itself; which is plainly calculated in it's own nature, and happy tendency, to serve the most excellent purposes of christian piety, and virtue.—Let christians, learn to entertain a becoming respect and regard for a gospel ministry

nistry; and, in consequence of this, duely honour, for their *work's sake*, all the faithful ministers of *Christ* of every denomination whatsoever. For, they all serve the same master, aim at the same end, and are engaged in the same blessed cause, *we preach not ourselves, but JESUS CHRIST the LORD, and ourselves, your SERVANTS, for Jesus's sake (n).*

2. Since the ministers of the gospel, are intrusted with so sacred an office; they must lie under an indispensable obligation to be *diligent* and *faithful* in the discharge of it. It greatly behoves every minister, to execute his high trust with the utmost diligence and fidelity. Because he is solemnly devoted to the christian ministry, as his proper work, and office, his very calling and profession. It is his proper business; and so, he is in conscience bound to attend, and mind it above all other affairs; that he may act in character, and give a good account. I from my heart wish, that ministers would be sensible of the worth and value of those dear immortal souls, which are committed to their care, and charge, and for whom *Christ* shed his most precious blood! *May the love of Christ constrain them! that as he died for all (o),* they may use their best endeavours to save all, both *themselves, and those that hear them.* God forbid, that through their neglect or misconduct, any man should perish, for

E 2

whom

(n) 2 Cor. iv. 5. See *Pyle* in loc.

(o) 2 Cor. iv. 14.

whom *Christ* died (*p*)! May they be pure from the blood, of all men; as *St. Paul* was (*q*) that so, if any perish under their ministry, their blood may be upon their own heads: like those, who deny the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction (*r*). —Let others boast, as much as they please, of an *indelible character*; and there fix all the merit of their office, if they have nothing better to recommend it (*s*). Sincere endeavours, alone, to promote the interest of truth, virtue and real religion, will stand the test, and bear the scrutiny of the last day. And, though, from what hath been said, it appears, I think, with a sufficient degree of evidence, that a regular admission into the ministerial office, is a thing very useful, and therefore desirable; yet, after all, it may prove to belong rather to the outward form, than to the real essence, of the ministerial character (*t*). Truly, those persons are much to be pitied, who lay the whole stress of the matter upon a *regular uninterrupted succession*; especially, if this depends upon the private intention of the priest (*w*). For, upon this principle, they can neither satisfy others,

nor

(*p*) 1 Cor. viii. 11.

(*q*) Acts xx. 26.

(*r*) 2 Pet. ii. 1.

(*s*) See *Bingham's* scholastic hist. of lay baptism.

(*t*) Qui enim habet in se, quæ *Paulus* enumerat de Episcopo, etsi non est coram hominibus Episcopus. Episcopus est apud Deum, etsi non per Ordinationem hominum ad eum gradum pervenit. *Origen*. in *Matth.* Tract. 24.

(*w*) See the Reverend Mr. *Marsden*. The uncertainty of any true priests, or sacraments in the Roman church.

nor themselves, of the *lawfulness*, and *validity*, of their own ministrations (as they love to speak) until they have made out that succession upon clear and certain grounds, and traced it down step by step, all the way from the apostles. But, in relation to this point, what says the present Bishop of *Winchester*? " It hath not pleased
 " God in his providence, to keep up any proof
 " of the least probability, or moral possibility
 " of a regular uninterrupted succession. But
 " there is a great appearance, and humanely
 " speaking, a certainty of the contrary; that
 " this succession hath been often interrupted :"
 with a good deal more to the same purpose (x).

— Wherefore, let every minister prudently endeavour, as much as he can (and jointly concur with his brethren in the spirit of wisdom and love) to preserve order and regularity in the churches of *Christ*. For, ministers serve a God of order, not of confusion. But let him lay no more stress upon external forms, than the nature of the thing will bear, and the reason of the case may require. I humbly think, it ought to be their principal care, their highest aim and ambition, as I am very sure, it will be their greatest honour and satisfaction, to be serviceable to the souls of men, by training them up in knowledge and holiness, for heaven and eternal happiness. If it shall please God, to honour them so far, as to make them the instruments

(x) *Hoadley*. Preservative against the princip. & pract. of the Nonjurors.

ments of his own glory, in the salvation of mankind; verily, they shall in no wise lose their reward. For, *when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory, which fadeth not away.* (y).

(y) 1 Pet. v. 4.

F I N I S.



Q

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